

Steering Committee Members Ward 6 NPA

Matt Grady

Mary Riley

Joel FitzGerald

Michelle Mraz

Lisa Thompson (substitute for Michelle)

NPA Meeting September 3, 2020

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81027856568>

(Meeting ID: 810 2785 6568)

Meeting Start Time: 6:30pm

Opening public Questions and Comments:

Question to the Mayor:

Question: What type of actions are the City Council taking on Reparation?

Miro: There is a 5-person task force that has been formed with a 50,000 budget.

The topics that are being discussed is what is owed re: slavery and the racial injustice "Color of Law" with the role of City Government and Federal money that is available. There was a suggestion to communicate this information to the Black Lives Matter movement happening in the City. With hopes that the information will help channel energy to move forward. The Mayor stated that he had a scheduled time to meet with the protestors coming up.

Miro Weinberger, Mayor of Burlington

Started off by saying he is pleased with the City's approach regarding the pandemic and credits Brian Lowe and case studies from PA and St. Louis. He says that taking action with masking, quarantine support, and closing bars and restaurants also aided in the virus suppression.

September being a key month with public schools and colleges opening back up he believes that the virus suppression will continue which he credits to the dry run in June. Working together with lots of conversations on all levels and the transparency of testing has contributed to this success.

The City has worked closely with all the Colleges and their policies to ensure they are being carried out and the disciplinary actions to follow with being able to respect student's privacies. The Mayor asked for Continued public support in respecting all guidelines for social gathering numbers and the fact all bars will be closing at 11pm will aid to the virus suppression. He encouraged the public to call BPD with any

concerns regarding large gatherings. UVM has agreed to supplement the BPD by providing funding for officers conducting supplemental COVID Educational Circuits on foot.

Miro also touched on UVM's testing numbers of more than 10,000 tests conducted and the numbers that resulted. The results are shared on a daily basis with the Vermont Department of Health and included in the department's aggregate daily reporting. He has encouraged people to track the virus and numbers on the COVID Act now website and the City of Burlington's website along with the City's Facebook page.

Question at the end:

How is the City dealing with the homeless at this time? Are the programs that were offered before still continuing? Miro said that although the RV program was over in June that are long term camping in tents that have been coordinated with North Beach campground. The City is working on a long-term low barrier warming shelter and is encouraged with the few infections within in the homeless community.

Tom Flanagan BSD Superintendent

Tom introduced himself and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity of being a part of the Burlington School District. He stated he believed that that the success to education was grounded on relationships and that collaboration is important. He was able to deliver a live virtual Welcome Back to the staff along with members of the school board, BEA and a BHS student representative. He has implemented a 100-day plan that will include Race and Equality with school leaders to include knowledge of systemic racism. Restorative practices and relationships with adults and students. Equality budgeting, increasing engagement with ELL families, deep learning is within this scope as well.

Reopening safely is a main goal to ensure all are feeling safe is key. Tom is confident that following the State and Agency of Educations guidelines and choosing the options of 2 being a split hybrid alternating scheduling was the right choice at this time. The Summer program resulted in 0 infections and credited the School Nursing staff along with the local group of Pediatricians for these efforts.

The District has also addressed and cleaned with ventilation systems, put in new air filters, increased airflow along with air purifiers and fans.

Public comment that BSD should tap into King Street staffing for some of their knowledge and experience with handling COVID 19. Question asked of exposure at the High School. There are isolation rooms at the school and health checks in place with contact tracing with the policies set up with the Department of Health Guidelines in place. Public enthusiasm of the Superintendent living in the district which is something that has not occurred in several years.

Dr. Benjamin Ola, Akande President Champlain College

Dr Akande took over July 1st as President of Champlain College. He expressed excitement and confidence in the return of students to Champlain's campus. The college's decision to reopen was based on the experts, data and science and the health and safety exceeded the state requirements. He did state that Champlain has had 1 positive COVID 19 test as of 9/2 and was actively conducting contact tracing. The faculty and staff have signed an agreement and anyone violating that agreement faces expulsion from the College. The fact that it is a smaller institution will give Champlain the flexibility to change. He expressed excitement at the BTV Local Skill Accelerator Program. Please feel free to check it out on the College's website. The affordable way to continue education has received a very good response.

He stated that it is very important that the College maintain good relationships with the community and continue to be a good neighbor. He concluded should anyone have any questions on the new year to please reach out to him.

Sandy Yusen Director of Communications Champlain College

Sandy touched base on the fall 2020 calendar has been modified and staggered for safety precautions. There will be no break and after Thanksgiving break most classes if not all will be remote. Priority is given to new and transfer students for testing. The first test being when they arrive and the second on the 7th day. There is also weekly mandatory testing for current staff and students. The staff and students have signed a Shared Responsibilities COVID Let Us Care agreement. There is a code of conduct for safety protocol within the agreement. She encourages anyone with any concern of a social gathering violating the state guidelines to notify the BPD so they may address it. The college is monitoring those situations and anyone violating the agreement could face expulsion.

Public comment of concern about the amount of college students partaking in the protesting. While people are wearing masks there is no practice of social distancing being use. Sandy responded that the College is taking these situations very seriously and are monitoring the situations very closely. She revisited the violations of the agreements that were signed and the actions of expulsion.

Annie Stevens Vice Provost for Student Affairs, University of Vermont

Annie thanked the NPA for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Student Affairs. UVM's initiatives are close to Champlain's and they continue to work together with the Department of Health and the City officials. All students are required to have COVID testing upon prearrival and another test upon arrival, and another on day 7. The isolation hall is provided for free for students needing to quarantine during that time. All students must sign a green/gold promise agreement. They are at 98% completion at this time. They have worked on de densifying halls and requiring masks. Violations of the green/gold agreement such as large parties are violations and could result in expulsion. The ambassador program is currently reaching out to students with a social media campaign. She encourages anyone with concerns to utilize the BPD and the more information to provide to a concerning situation the better. UVM with Champlain are working together to be good neighbors to the community and be safe.

Public question of why are larger Universities having so many issues and shutting down so soon. Annie stated that many of these Universities are in “hot spots” already and seem to not have a solid testing system. It is a bit different in situations with 30,000 students as opposed to the size of UVM. Another question; what are the University’s plans for the next semester. Dependent on the virus and the numbers with the recommendations of the medical community and the Government and City recommendations it is undetermined at this time. It is everyone’s hope to return back to as normal as possible.

End of the meeting. 8:00pm

Minutes submitted by Lisa Thompson